

R. MOTTA

THE CROSS-BREEDING OF GODS IN AFRO-BAZILIAN RELIGIONS

Brazil religious tradition is a good example of the cross-breeding of the gods. This article is primarily concerned with the religious cross-breeding that often accompanies ethnic inter-changes. Brazil is characterized by the survival of pagan religions originating from Africa. These religions were long perceived as nothing but «folkloric» religious expression or as a «deviation» of the Catholic religion, brought by the Portuguese. But it is more exact to consider that the gods of African origin (or *orixas*) infiltrated the mainstream (Christian) tradition and «survived» in Brazil by assuming the form of Christian saints.

J.-J. DUBOIS

AMERINDIAN SPIRITUALITY IN LIBERATION THEOLOGY: THE SANDINIST CASE

This article intends to show the permanence of Amerindian spirituality within Sandinist theory when presented from a liberation theology perspective. The opposition between somozism/sandinism constitutes a *system* and corresponds to the old antagonism between the two principal gods of the Aztec and Toltec people, Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca. Globally, the modern structure of oppression/liberation — actualised by somozist and sandinist values — are similar to the older structure grounded in Aztec and Toltec values.

L. BABÈS

SUPPRESSION OF IDENTITY: RELIGION AND CULTURE IN MAGHRIB

Forgetting the historical past that stresses ethnic and religious differences as well as the numerous cross-breedings that occurred through the centuries, the religious discourse in Maghrib is solely grounded in Islam (and Arab identity). Paradoxically, the exacerbation of the negation of local culture has recently favoured a debate that allows rethinking of the relation between Maghrib and Islam. This is particularly noticeable with the Berber issue.



A. MARY

AFRICAN COLLAGE OF CHRISTIAN HEROES

Many discourses depict *syncretism* as one of the characteristics of postmodernity. We must, however, question the social and cultural logics, as well as the various models, that yield an understanding of this syncretism. Thus we could, for example, wonder about the compatibility of two of these main models: the biological (and primarily ideological) model of «cross-breeding» (that suggest a fusion and a hybridization of cultural aspects) and the apparently more mechanical model of combination (collage) of elements that are not only heterogeneous, but often even heteroclit. This article raises such a question regarding the appropriation of Christian saints and heroes by the *Fang* culture of Gabon.

A. MORELLI

THE CHRISTIAN REINTERPRETATION OF PRE-CHRISTIAN CELEBRATIONS

Adherents of revealed religious traditions often believe that the cult particular to their tradition (its celebrations, initiation, rites of passage, etc.) is *original*, i.e. directly related to the founder of their religion. This can be used as an exceptional model for understanding the cross-breeding of the Gods and of beliefs. Historians have analyzed various and obvious cases of borrowing, of superpositions and of syncretism related to the cults. Although not advancing a new thesis, this article attempts to show how the most important Christian celebrations are reinterpretations of rites of pre-Christian origin (more particularly of Jewish, Roman and Oriental roots).

A. COUTURE

THE «SYNCRETISM» OF REINCARNATIONIST CHRISTIANS:  
ANALYTICAL SURVEY OF A THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

This article intends to question the pertinence of the concept of «syncretism» from the perspective of the ambiguities related to such a concept. Indeed, since approximately fifteen years, theologians and

ministers, catholic and protestant, willingly qualify those Christians who tend to accept reincarnation as «syncretistic». Convinced that reincarnation is alien to the most fundamental intuitions of Christianity, these Christians use this accusation of syncretism to safeguard the purity of their dogmas. This article presents some reflections on the method that the modern science of religion approaches the issue of syncretism. It also analyses the different arguments that are implied by the use of the term «syncretism».

S. JOUBERT

A JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF POLYTHEISM: THE CASE OF ASTROLOGY

The delicate passage from religion to religiosity can be paralleled to that of monotheism to polytheism, to that of uniformity to the explosion of values. In relation to this, astrology — when perceived through its pantheon (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, etc.) — perfectly illustrates the postmodern deviation towards a «polytheist reason». In this kind of reasoning, the meaning of the relation supersedes objectivity. The popularity of this «polytheist reason» emerges from the fact that it allows a symbolic relation with an existence that gods metaphorically co-administrate.

L. FOURNEL

SYMBOLICAL SYNCRETISM AND HEALING:  
THE CASE OF A CONTEMPORARY QUEBEC HEALER

The practice of healing through the imposition of hands is still highly associated with faith. This constatation clearly emerges from the study of a Quebec healer who has recently discovered his «gift». In order to better understand the particular relation that is established with the patient during the healing sessions, this article analyzes the various models — psychoanalytic, religious (Christian) and shamanic — that the healer himself used to interpret his personal experience. This syncretism illustrates, in its own way, the religious cross-breeding that seems to characterize our postmodern societies.

J. GRIFFET

RELIGIONS OF THE SEA. ADVENTURE TALES AND RELIGIOSITY IN THE  
TWENTIETH CENTURY

The sea can be perceived as a vast and wild space where religiosity manifests itself. Adventure tales, lived and written down between 1920 and 1970, express the feeling of fusion with nature and with the world. This impression was first developed within a unified system of beliefs and practices that valorised the virtues of air. At the end of the thirties, however, this «religion of the sea» wanes to allow the emergence of a variety of sensory images. From now on, sensibilities related to marine environment are to be understood from a much more polytheistic scheme.

A.-M. BILODEAU

JOSEPH CAMPBELL: PLAYING WITH TIME AND ETERNITY

In an attempt to understand the mystery of their destiny, human beings have, since times immemorial, invented myths and sacred stories by using the appropriate symbols within their own culture. Thus, according to mythologist Joseph Campbell, symbols are not eternal: they come into being, evolve and ultimately die when the environment from which they arose is transformed. In this era of vast social changes, the traditional Christian symbols have often become obsolete to the modern mind. Clinging to them would be fruitless. Until new mythologies arise, everyone must create their own myths, myths that often lie off the beaten path.

W. TEASDALE

1893-1993: THE PARLIAMENT OF WORLD'S RELIGIONS

— OR THE DREAM OF A NEW CIVILISATION

This article attempts to locate the importance and the signification of the second *Parliament of World's Religions* that was held in Chicago during the summer of 1993. Several hundred representatives of the main religious traditions of the world were united at this exceptional gathering. This meeting marked the first century since the first *Parliament of World's religions* that was organized in Chicago in 1893, as part of the *Columbian World Exposition*. One of the instigators for this meeting was Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). Contemporary religious history was greatly influenced by this meeting, for it initiated inter-religious dialogue as we know it today. ■